



## WORDS IN STONE: Reptilian Excerpts, Translated

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*speculative fiction forward to “On the Grammars of Being:  
The Privilege & Practice of Illegibility” by Rachel Dreyfuss*

### **Dry Moon, Day 14**

We left the obelisk today, our tails heavy and cold as night descended. Nothing but endless rock plains in sight now. On the map, two plains are marked with distinctly different runes that I cannot crack. I’m curious about them, but I was sorry to leave the obelisk. At least I have my sketches. The dot is in every rune, and every line refers back to it. But what is *it*?

### **Dry Moon, Day 26**

The chemist laughed when I lay on my belly like our ancestors, scratching with my claws, smelling the dust with my tongue. The overgrown, fertile rock plain smelled like a garden. But the barren plain, right next to it, left a metallic taste in my mouth. The chemist came back after running tests—the fertile plain was high in potassium and nitrogen, the barren one in mercury.

### **Cold Moon, Day 2**

STONE. THE DAMNED DOT MEANS STONE.

They didn’t use themselves as the point of reference—that *it* I wondered about is the stone that forms this entire continent:

Weather—sun on stone

Time—erosion by wind and weather

Space—here/body-stone

And the VERBS!—What stone does/what is done to stone

I was lying on the ground again, like they would have, rolling a pebble between my claws. It fell into the carved dot of a rune and fit there perfectly. I ran around camp, laughing and waving my notes.

I climbed the hill and saw the lines of the fertile plain spell out in huge runes:

|||.||| .|. ||. *People digging furrows in rock for plants. Agriculture.*

In the light of the Cold Moon, I shed my skin, having grown too large for my old way of knowing.